



State of Illinois  
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**Illinois River Coordinating Council Quarterly Meeting**

**Tuesday, October 20, 2009  
Pere Marquette Hotel, Cotillion Ballroom  
Peoria, Illinois  
6:30 PM**

**Minutes**

**Tribute to Governor Quinn and the Honorable Ray LaHood – Bob Frazee, University of Illinois Extension**

Frazee welcomed everyone to the conference and presented Governor Pat Quinn and Secretary Ray LaHood with an engraved photo plaque representing a tribute to their bi-partisan work to establish the Illinois River 20-20 Program, Illinois River Conservation Reserve and Enhancement Program, Illinois River Coordinating Council, Illinois River Mud to Parks Project, and Illinois River Ecosystem and Navigation Program.

**Remarks from Governor Pat Quinn and Ray LaHood**

Governor Quinn honored Secretary LaHood's effort's as a Congressman to help the conservation and preservation of the Illinois River. Stakeholders should continue working together to restore the Illinois River to its 1673 condition as described by Marquette and Joliet. He honored Natural Resources Director, Marc Miller, for his efforts as Director. The Departments programs contribute to the restoration and conservation of the Illinois River, like the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program and the Mud to Parks program. Some projects within the \$100 million capital bill will directly support restoration and conservation of the Illinois River. Governor Quinn will work with the Dept of Natural Resources to get the next generation of conservationists outside and will work to enhance nature-based tourism.

Secretary LaHood honored Governor Quinn and the Illinois Transportation Team on their efforts to spend stimulus dollars. He recognized Governor Quinn's keen, genuine interest in Illinois River conservation and restoration. He also acknowledged the audience's contributions to river conservation and encouraged continued efforts, especially the Mud to Parks projects and the building of the Peoria Island. He reminded the audience of the economic impacts of the river of the cities up and down the Mississippi river.

**Call to Order and Roll Call**

**Citizen Members**

Daphne Mitchell; John Quail, Friends of the Chicago River; Michael Reuter, The Nature Conservancy; and Wendell



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Shauman, Illinois Farm Bureau.

### State Agency Members

Steve Chard, Department of Agriculture; Christine Davis, Environmental Protection Agency; Director Marc Miller, Department of Natural Resources; Charles Perino, Department of Transportation; and Terry Weldin-Frisch, Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

### Ex-Officio Members

Lee Albright, US Fish and Wildlife Service; Director Colleen Callahan, USDA Rural Development; William Gradle, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service; Brian Johnson, US Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District; Don King, USDA Farm Service Agency; Gary Meden, US Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District; Charles Shea, US Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District; Richard Sparks, University of Illinois; and Doug Yeskis, US Geological Survey.

### Approval of Minutes

Shauman moved to approve minutes from July 24, 2009 meeting in Glencoe. Director Callahan seconded. Minutes approved unanimously with no corrections.

### Member Comment Period

Director Miller welcomed Colleen Callahan, the new director of Illinois' USDA Rural Development Office, to the IRCC.

Director Miller gave an update of motions from the Glencoe meeting. The move to send a letter to the Pollution Control Board showing their support of disinfection of the Chicago River system. Due to the unique position the IRCC is faced with, without a Lt. Governor in office, certain IRCC actionable items present a conflict of interest for Pat Quinn as Governor and as Chair of the IRCC. An example of such is the letter of support for IEPA's proposed water quality standard improvements for the Chicago Area Waterways. In such cases, when the voting members unanimously decide on an action that presents a conflict of interest for the Governor, IRCC staff will complete the action on behalf of the citizen members. A letter will be drafted for all IRCC citizen members to sign. I hope this strategy will allow IRCC to continue on the path towards improvements of the Illinois River watershed's ecological and economic integrity.

### Presentations

**Illinois River Valley Conservation Award – Doug Blodgett, The Nature Conservancy**



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Blodgett explained the award recognizes outstanding conservation efforts, results, and leadership over a sustained period of time for the Illinois River and its watershed. This year's award recognized Bob Frazee. Frazee has been involved with the research and implementation of sound and effectual conservation practices in the Illinois River watershed for the last 35 years with the University of Illinois Extension. His research and relationships with Illinois' agricultural districts has contributed to use of low-till and no-till agricultural practices throughout the Illinois River watershed. Bob was also recognized for his advocacy of stream bank stabilization technologies. Frazee's efforts in water conservation can be noted in the numerous authored and co-authored scientific journals, books, and manuals he's produced during his prodigious career in water conservation.

**Illinois River Team Update – Debbie Bruce, IL Dept of Natural Resources**

The Illinois River Team (IRT) recommended at the July 22, 2009 IRCC meeting that the IRCC send a letter to the Illinois Congressional Delegation requesting support for a Congressional Addition of \$10 Million for the Illinois River Basin Restoration in Conference Committee for the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill. This was to allow completion of the Upper Peoria Island, initiating construction on the 2 Pekin Lake projects and continue work on the feasibility portion of 10 critical restoration projects.

A letter was drafted by the IRT for approval by Governor's Office. That letter was not sent, because the Peoria Island project was awarded \$3.2 million in stimulus funds in August, 2009 to complete the project. The Rock Island Corps also submitted an ARRA need for the two Pekin Lake projects as District priorities for a second round of stimulus funding, if available. Also, Senator Durbin's office indicated that it was too late to submit requests for additional funding in Conference. They recommended that the IRCC and State work with their office and the Congressional Delegation to secure funding in Federal FY 2011.

The letter for the IRCC to send to the Science Advisory Committee and to Organizations requesting appointments has been drafted and waiting on approval.

On August 26, 2009, the IRT met via conference call. At that meeting, a presentation was given by the St. Louis Team on the newly formed Floodplain Restoration System Team for NESP Land Acquisition and floodplain restoration. The PowerPoint presentation is posted to <ftp://163.191.72.109> (go to internet and enter site in browser: user name: dnr, password: idnr, then enter the "Public" folder site and the IRT files with the presentation are there). You may also send an email to [rick.mollahan@illinois.gov](mailto:rick.mollahan@illinois.gov) and request it be sent to you.

The Floodplain Restoration System Team has been organized to identify opportunities to implement NESP Land Acquisition and Floodplain Restoration Plan. The plan calls for 35,000 acres to be restored over a 15 year period. The



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restoration requires a non-federal sponsor. Land for the ecosystem restoration must be acquired by a non-federal sponsor (includes not for profit entities). The Land will count toward the non-federal 35% match for the restoration. If the Land value exceeds the project 35% the non-federal sponsor will be reimbursed, as funding is available.

The next IRT meeting will be scheduled in November to develop strategy to work with Congressional Delegation for the Illinois River Basin Restoration. It will also look at opportunities within the Illinois Reach for the NESP Floodplain Restoration Plan, finalize a mission statement and activities, coordinate with the IRWG on their project recommendations and other program interests, and begin drafting charter.

**Illinois River Working Group Update – Marshall Plumley, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Rock Island**

Plumley provided an update on the formation of the Illinois River Working Group and current planning activities being undertaken by this group. The purpose of the planning activities is to integrate the various Corps ecosystem restoration efforts and develop a process for future project identification that lead to a portfolio of restoration measures that address the Goals and Objectives established for the Illinois River in 2007. Their next meeting will be held in Peoria, November 3, to review and modify the project identification process allowing projects to be chosen on their ecosystem merit. State and federal agencies, Non-Government Organizations and citizen groups have been invited.

Director Miller commented that the IRT and Illinois River Working Group are significant in that they allow more stakeholder involvement in processes. We appreciate the Corps willingness to work with all involved and it helps us move forward with this effort to build stronger relationships and partnerships and hopefully will help to achieve more accomplishments. He encouraged all to get involved where possible and we can move forward with our goals.

**Asian Carp Barrier Update – Charles Shea, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers – Chicago**

The Chicago Sanitary Barrier system is located in Romeoville and it consists of three barriers to prevent movement of invasive fish from between Lake Michigan and the Chicago and Illinois Rivers. The focal point right now is the movement of bighead carp from the Illinois River into the Chicago River system and Lake Michigan.

In addition to the Corps work on the barrier, they are working with a multi-agency group to monitor the location of silver and big head carp within the barrier system. In an effort to be cutting edge and use every tool available to find where the fish are they are using a new monitoring technique with the University of Notre Dame called Environmental DNA Monitoring. Water samples are collected and tested by the University and within those water samples we can detect DNA of specific species of fish. We started process this summer in the Illinois River system of the Dresden Island and north. The Corps found that silver and bighead carp are much closer to barrier than any earlier detection indicated as



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the technique and its results are better at detecting smaller populations. The E-DNA shows that silver and bighead carp are in the Lockport pool of the Chicago Sanitary Shipping Canal, between the Lockport Lock and Dam and the barriers. They have not detected any fish north of the barriers and that area is testing that area is now a priority. The Corps does not suspect that any fish have breached the barriers. The carp have also been detected in Des Plaines River, three miles upstream from the barrier, and in the Illinois-Michigan Canal, three miles downstream of the barrier.

Two pieces of barrier system are up and operating, the demonstration barrier and the first half of the second barrier -Barrier IIA. The second barrier is intended to have two halves. Barrier IIB is under construction right now and will continue through 2010. The Corps has an ongoing research program to identify exactly what the optimum power perimeters are to best deter the carp. Indications are that the outer areas of Barrier 1 are effective on larger fish, but not as effective on smaller fish. We are trying to determine correct perimeters for all sizes of fish. Our results show that the optimal settings should be at a higher voltage with frequent more pulsing. With the first reports that carp were near the barrier, the decision was made to turn up IIA to optimum operating levels. The Corps is concerned that Barrier IIA will need to be turned off for periods of time as it is a mechanical system and needs periodic maintenance work. Barrier 1 was not designed to operate and sustain at the higher wattage. The Corps is having ongoing discussions with DNR, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about actions to reduce possibilities for fish moving through barrier during maintenance.

Another concern is the potential for fish to bypasses the barrier. There are signs of carp in the Des Plaines River and I&M Canal from high water events when there are temporary connections between the Des Plaines and I&M Canal into the Sanitary Canal. The Corps is actively investigating potential bypasses. They are also working on a report addressing interim solutions to cut off potential bypasses. Next step will be to implement solutions, but the Corps does not have authority to build or construct anything to cut off potential bypasses. The Energy & Water appropriations Act of 2010 is awaiting presidential signature and it includes language to allow the Corps to take interim steps to close of potential bypasses. A second report sometime in September 2010 will outline more permanent solutions to potential bypasses.

**Peoria Lake, Mud to Jobs Program – Tom Tincher, Heartland Water Resources Council**

The filling in of Peoria Lakes is an ecological, economic, recreational and community development disaster. The urban lakefront has a tremendous potential to become a model sustainable water-oriented development project. Traditionally, projects have focused on conservation or ecosystem enhancement. This approach has constrained the generation of sufficient funds to undertake the amount of work that is required to effectively address the massive challenge. By recognizing the recreational, navigation and community development value of the Peoria Lakes opens additional funding sources. Aspects of this plan include the Lower Lake Secondary Channel, in-lake and sediment flow reduction projects, the establishment of a sediment processing center, and proposed lakefront conservation



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improvements. The total Lower Lake Restoration Project cost could range between \$75 and \$100 million.

Significant dredging, sediment transport, processing, marketing, sales, distribution and utilization of sediment for economic development, recreational uses, and conservation projects will increase job opportunities in the community. This is a major economic development initiative with built-in conservation goals that can promote sustainability.

The initial "Mud to Jobs" endeavor as currently proposed has three key project components: 1) Lake Restoration Jobs & Business Development Projects, 2) Community Revitalization Projects, 3) Neighborhood Job Connection Projects, and 4) Dredging & Sediment Utilization Operational Components.

Progress is being made in every one of the areas of focus identified above and great interest has been shown by the parties involved. They believe that this approach to the Peoria Lakes restoration has great promise to generating the major financial resources required to provide a sustainable solution to the sedimentation challenge. The Heartland Water Resources Council and the Community Development & Service Institute are working with a number of potential key players in the Lake Restoration Job & Business Opportunities Component.

Tincher proposes that the initial "Mud to Jobs" Project involve the Lower Peoria Lake with a primary focus on the East Peoria lakefront. The community should establish selected job opportunities and small & minority business development opportunities as "pathways out of poverty" for the urban poor. The Community Development & Service Institute (CD&SI) and the Illinois People's Action (IPA) requested from the Federal Reserve \$1 billion in low-interest loans and \$27 million in capacity-building grants over the next five years to support such projects as our "Mud to Jobs" endeavor. The Chicago Reserve is currently organizing a meeting between IPA and Illinois banks to discuss the proposal.

#### Recommended IRCC Actions

1. Support HWRC & CD&SI by generating \$100,000 in funding so that they can immediately work with all of the partners and facilitate the development of a more detailed overall Lower Lake Restoration & Lakefront Revitalization Plan.
2. Support HWRC & CD&SI in their planning effort by generating \$250,000 to fund the Illinois State Water Survey to undertake the needed Hydraulic & Hydrology Assessment & Design work concurrent with the overall planning effort.

#### Recommended Project Partners Actions

1. Work with John Marlin, P.A. Atherton, TransPort, and other potential public/private partners in establishing the Dredging & Sediment Utilization Operational Components.
2. Work with the Corps of Engineers and secure Secondary Channel design dollars and the future Corps share of



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construction funding.

3. Work with IDNR, ISWS, and others to incorporate appropriate conservation and water recreation elements into the restoration plan and pursue funding opportunities.
4. Establish a Conservation Corps and immediately seek economic development and streambank erosion control funding to establish “pathway out of poverty” projects and training programs for work within the Farm Creek and Ten Mile Creek tributaries.

Sparks commented that we need some economic answers to figure out which proposed projects will actually generate long-term jobs in this area. Two very different things you mentioned - dredging – likely to be done by skilled dredgers from another area. Workers to reduce stream bank erosion might be the equivalent of civilian conservation corps and will require technical training.

Tincher responded that there are plans to reach out to urban neighborhood and establish a conservation corps to carry out stream bank erosion projects and include an education training component through Bradley University.

Director Miller announced that DNR will host committee of the IRCC to meet before next meeting, with DCEO and others to flush out some of the obstacles and opportunities.

**Mud to Parks – John Marlin, Illinois Sustainable Technology Center – University of Illinois**

There is \$8 million in the Capital program that will be allocated to some of the Mud to Parks programs. Some places with planned or ongoing projects for which this money could be utilized include Decatur, Tazewell County, Morris, Chicago Park District, and the State Fish and Wildlife Areas of Banner Marsh, East Peoria, Rice Lake, Marshal County and Woodford County. However, capital funds must be spent under the strict rules governing bond money and there are many complications with some of these sites.

Also, there is much interest developing in using soil and sediment. Twenty years ago, Fox Waterway authority contacted me about potential use of their sediment for their waterway for topsoil. This year the waterway authority found local and regional markets to sell the soil.

**Other Business**

Director Callahan would like to build a stronger connection between Council goals and rural development. There are greater opportunities including lending institutions for rural communities funding for loans/grants in communities of 10,000, 20,000, and 50,000 and smaller. Many of the communities along the river would qualify. Projects in these





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communities should consider rural development in proposals.

**Public Comment Period**

Mitchell read comments from Mayor of Ottawa. The City thanked the Council and IDNR for their work. He would like to express his concern for the brush pile and sediment on the Fox River aqueduct along the I&M Canal. The aqueduct is a historic structure and recent floods threaten the aqueduct and could cause damage to the adjacent hospital in Ottawa. At least \$500,000 is needed to remove the brush pile and sediment. Ottawa does not have the financial resources needed to remove the brush pile but it can dredge the accumulated sediment. The hospital will provide land along the Fox River shore near the aqueduct for sediment placement. The Corps suggest Ottawa pursue 208 grant needed to dredge. Director Miller committed IDNR to work with the city to seek resolution and funding for this issue.

Terry Ingram of the Eagle Nature Foundation commented that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service removed the bald eagle from the Threatened & Endangered list. The DNR recently delisted based on falsified facts and not on sound scientific evidence. He does not believe the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service bald eagle counts or that they are doing all that can be done to provide habitat. Agencies should work to provide secure areas for eagles to roost.

Twila Yednock asked for help to stop any additional clear cutting of trees along a transmission line on the Fox River that could destroy seven miles of riparian forest. The Judge has reopened the Illinois Commerce Commission case.

Joyce Blumenshine, Heart of Illinois Sierra Club reported that a Nationwide 21 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit has been issued to approve a strip mine in Canton, IL. This mine will impact Canton Lake and the water supply for approximately 20,000 people. A Nationwide 21 permit is an abbreviated permit process that needs no public comment or hearings. The Corps depends on the decision making of the state agency. People in Brereton live within 300' from perimeter of mine and live on well water. Here again, on the Illinois River valley that we are giving so much time and effort and tax dollars trying to protect, we have a surface coal strip mine impacting about 1084 acres in the Canton Lake watershed. The lake feeds into Copperas Creek, which feeds into the Illinois River.

Director Miller announced the new Conservation Congress, as a forum to listen and encourage our constituents to give us ideas on how we can work together to rebuild the Agency. This weekend, October 24 and 25, DNR will host an abbreviated forum. We would like to focus on three issues: youth recruitment and retention, funding, and public access. I would like to invite all here today to come to DNR this weekend and participate in this forum.

Reuter commented that citizen members should communicate before the next meeting to make decisions regarding action on the reopened ICC case. This was agreed to by the citizen members present.





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2010 Meeting Dates:

- February 17, 2010, 1:30 PM, Bradley Bourbonnais Sportsman's Club, Bourbonnais
- May 19, 2010, 1:30 PM, Department of Natural Resources, Lakeview Rooms, Springfield
- August 4, 2010, 1:30 PM, National Great Rivers Museum, Alton
- October 28, 2010, 1:30 PM, Chicago Botanic Garden, Nichols Hall, Glencoe

**Adjournment**

Mitchell moved to adjourn the meeting. Reuter seconded. The meeting adjourned unanimously at 8:00 PM.